

IX. LAND ACQUISITION

The 90-foot high cliff along the west side of the Neuse River is the main feature of Cliffs of the Neuse State Park. The cliffs are fragile due to their composition. The preservation of this geological feature is a primary goal of the state park. Another goal of the park is to protect rare species and high quality examples of natural communities along the river. The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program has identified the park to be within a Significant Natural Heritage Area. The Cliffs of the Neuse Registered Natural Heritage Area has populations of several significant natural communities.

Several factors are considered in determining whether a piece of property should be included in an acquisition plan. These include: data from the Natural Heritage Program and the Division of Water Quality; the park's existing identified needs; and the Division staff's surveys of the properties. Threats to these properties can be development, logging, and sedimentation from upstream development as well as other forms of irreparable damage. Needs and threats are evaluated to determine what additional properties need to be added to the acquisition plan of the park.

CURRENT ACQUISITION STATUS

Cliffs of the Neuse State Park contains 751 acres as of January 1, 2004. The primary focus of the park is the steep, colorful cliffs that are both an important scenic resource and a valuable educational resource. The diverse flora and fauna of the park area and the river ecosystems are also vital in the scheme of the park. Additional resource needs for the park should be addressed. The objectives for creating Cliffs of the Neuse State Park include the provision of appropriate public recreational use, the protection of the unique natural resources, buffering these resources and visitor activities, and protecting scenic views. With these objectives in mind, adjacent lands need to be looked at and assessed and a revised acquisition plan for the future protection needs of Cliffs of the Neuse State Park developed.

FUTURE ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the acquisition plan described in the *Cliffs of the Neuse State Park Master Plan*, completed in December 1977, requires the acquisition of an additional 112 acres. The high priority acquisitions include the protection of the view from the cliffs, protection of the Group Camping Area, buffer for the park entrance, protection of and permanent staff access to the primitive camping areas, and permanent access to the section of park on the east side of the river.

In addition to the remaining 112 acres identified for acquisition in the 1977 master plan, Division staff have recognized the need for expanding Cliffs of the Neuse State Park. Division staff recommend acquiring additional river corridor between the bridge crossings upstream and downstream of the park. Acquiring the river corridor would provide a 6 to 8 mile stretch of the river that would allow the park to add boating/canoeing to its recreational offerings and preserve the scenic view of the river

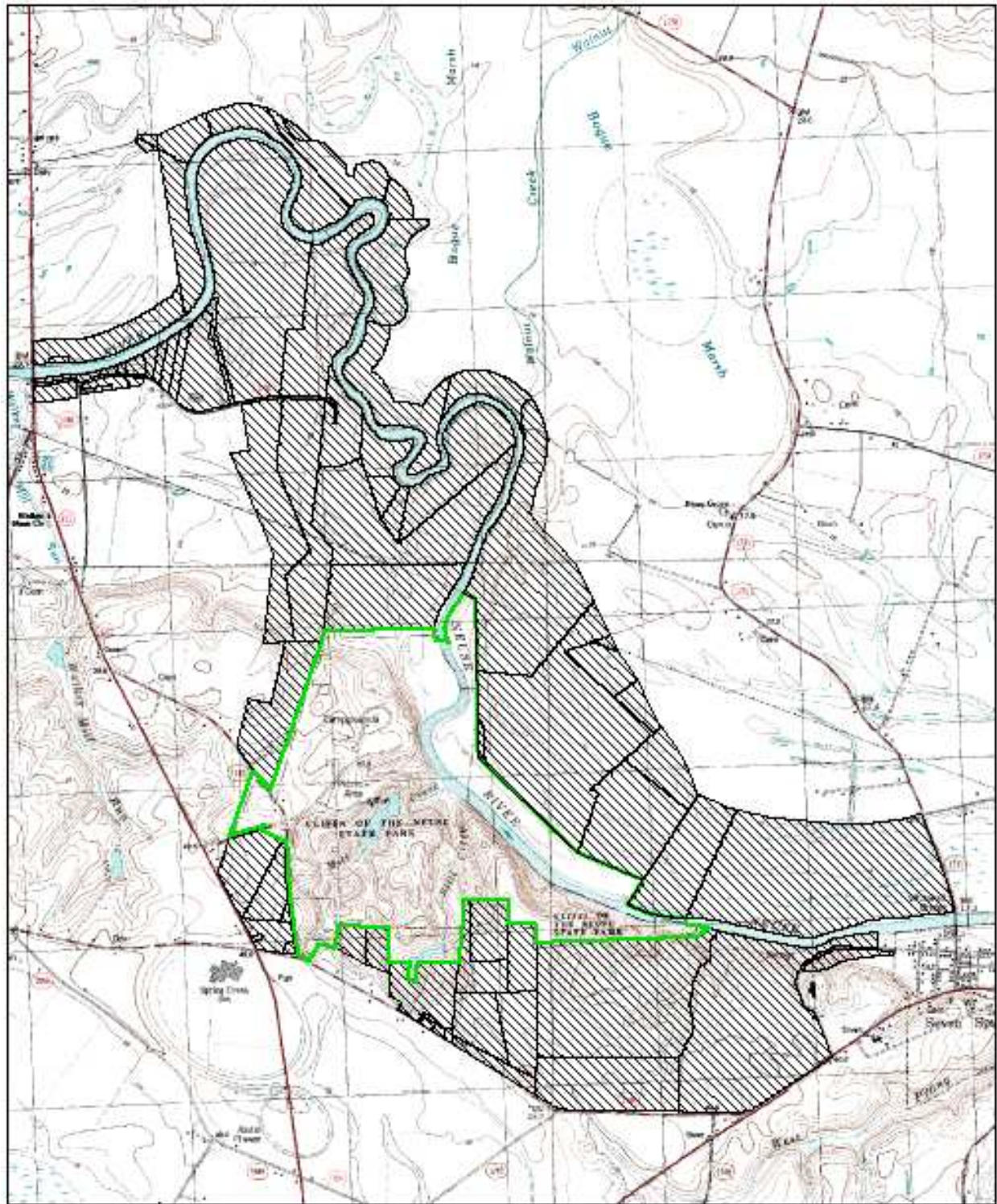
corridor. The purchase of the riparian corridor would also provide potential acreage for the future Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

The acquisition of land the between the park and the Town of Seven Springs was also recommended by park staff. This land would include the Seven Springs spring house as well as Night Springs. The springs are an important component of the area's cultural history.

ACQUISITION SUMMARY TABLE

Current size of the park (January 2004)	751 acres
Acreage needs per master plan	<u>112 acres</u>
Original planned size of the park	863 acres
Additions to master planned needs	<u>2,636 acres</u>
New total planned size of the park	3,499 acres


09/04




**Cliffs of the Neuse
State Park**

August 2004

Master Plan

 **State Park**

 **Future Need**

1000 0 1000 Feet



Division of Parks and Recreation